



**Audiology Support Personnel Task Force Meeting
August 9, 2007**

Westin Hotel – Pasadena
191 N. Los Robles
Pasadena, CA 91101
(626) 792-2727

Task Force Members Present

Alison Grimes Au.D., Chairperson
Naomi Smith, Au.D., Board Member
Rebecca Binge, M.A., Board Member
Lisa O'Connor, M.A., Board Member
Marcia Raggio, Ph.D., San Francisco State University
Richard Danielson, Ph.D., Johnson Space Center
Terry Hamill, Nova Southeastern University
Charles Martinez, Greater Los Angeles Veterans Administration
Angelina Valencia, Audiologist, Santa Cruz ENT/Physicians Hearing Aid Center

Staff Present

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer
Candace Raney, Staff Analyst

Board Members Present

Jennifer Hancock, M.A.
Paul Donald, M.D.

Board Members Absent

Diana Verdugo, M.S.
Carol Murphy, M.A.

Guests Present

Dennis Van Vliet, Audiologist, California Academy of Audiology

I. Call to Order

Ms. Grimes chaired the meeting and called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., and those present introduced themselves.

**II. Discuss the Need for Developing State Standards for Audiology Support Personnel
Including: Supervision Parameters, Training Standards, and Scope of Responsibility**

A. Review Existing State Provisions for Audiology Aides

**B. Examine Professional Position Statements on Audiology Support Personnel & Other
Related Technical Support Personnel**

Members of the Task Force were drawn from various practice sites, including the Veterans Administration, a university audiology doctoral training program, an ENT physician office, a private practice, and NASA-Johnson Space Center.

Documents provided to the Task Force included the California laws and regulations governing audiology aides and speech-language pathology assistants (for reference purposes), position statements and guidelines regarding audiology support personnel from both the American Academy of Audiology

and the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, job descriptions for support personnel at the Mayo Clinic, the Veterans Administration, and a description of the Certificate Program for Otolaryngology Personnel (CPOP) of the American Academy of Otolaryngology.

Chairperson Grimes stated that the existing shortage of audiology personnel in California has reached crisis proportions, and the near future expectations for new audiologists joining the workforce in California is not promising, as California has one existing audiology training program. Currently, Ms. Grimes reported that California has become a net importer of audiologists from other states and countries. She stated that the need for support personnel in audiology is absolutely necessary, as the current number of licensed audiologists in the state is not meeting the consumer demands, and she believes that adequately supervised support personnel can assist with service delivery demands.

Ms. Del Mugnaio explained that there are existing provisions for audiology support personnel in California, the audiology aide, who must be directly supervised 100% of the time while working with clients. She stated that direct supervision in this situation is defined as on-site, in-view oversight of the aide while the aide is working with a patient/client.

Chairperson Grimes stated that the intent of formulating the Task Force was to examine how other states or work settings are using audiology support personnel and to consider whether the existing laws and regulations in California should be amended so that the audiology aide category can be more useful in the delivery of audiology services.

Ms. Del Mugnaio stated that ultimately the Board must consider the consumer impact/safety issues in providing greater flexibility for using audiology aides and should be prepared to research new training and/or supervisions standards that would mitigate potential consumer risk and establish a minimal level of competency for audiology support personnel. She explained that any changes to the existing regulations must be supported by the enabling law, or legislative change would be necessary.

The members reported on their experiences with audiology support personnel, including use of support personnel in their clinics, training of support personnel in a university program, and use of personnel in the military and Veterans Administration settings. Further, other state laws and regulations regarding use of support personnel were discussed.

The Task Force discussed and made preliminary recommendations as follows:

- Consider expanding the current definition of “audiology aide” through a regulatory amendment, rather than a statutory change.
- Not attempt to define a specific “scope of work” for audiology support personnel, but rather:
 1. Broaden the existing supervision standards for the audiology “aide” to include a definition for “direct supervision” consistent with that defined in regulations, Section 1399.170 (c), regarding supervision of speech-language pathology assistants.
 2. Draft exclusions to tasks and duties which would be outside the scope of responsibility of the aide, rather than attempting to list a specific scope of work. For example:
 - ✓ No initial assessments
 - ✓ No invasive procedures
 - ✓ No activities that require independent decision-making
 - ✓ No autonomous practice

- Retain the provisions that the audiology aide continue to be registered by a supervising audiologist who is responsible for training the aide, and assigning a scope of responsibility based on the aide's work experience and competency, and which is in concert with the exclusionary provisions as established by the Board.
- Permit the audiology aide to function with off-site supervision only for limited routine activities (e.g., hearing aid repair), where interaction with client/patient is limited to routine equipment repair or general equipment consultation.
- Review existing laws to determine whether current provisions for the registered aide may be accomplished through regulatory amendments.
- Determine whether there is any language in the Hearing Aid Dispenser's Law that may conflict with the proposed amendments.

The Task Force identified the following action items that should be completed prior to the October 25-26, 2007 Board meeting:

- Review statutory and regulatory language in other states' practice acts.
- Draft regulatory proposed changes and seek legal counsel on statutory limitations.
- Submit document to Task Force for edits and comments.

III. Public Comment

There were no further comments from the public.

IV. Future Meetings

No future Task Force meetings were planned at this time.

V. Adjournment

Chairperson Grimes adjourned the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Annemarie Del Mugnaio, Executive Officer